

Testimony of Christen Cassidy
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Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
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HB 5473: AN ACT CONCERNING THE Statute of Limitations for Bringing an Action for Damages for the Sexual Assault of a Minor

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Christen Cassidy. I am an intern of the New Britain and Hartford Sexual Assault Crisis Service and a state certified Sexual Assault Crisis Counselor/Advocate. I am writing in request for support of House Bill 5473.

As a survivor of child sexual abuse, I understand what a huge stigma it is for children and adults to deal with such a traumatic event that you had no control overshadowing you every day. In my case, the statute of limitations did not apply. My abuser soon died after I disclosed 16 years ago, which would have given me time to report the abuse.

However, I understand the fear of disclosing, the fear of no one believing you. Some victims are fearful of their offenders. Many victims wait until their offender is deceased because they are so afraid of them. For example, the Dr Reardon case, these victims were silenced by their fear of him. Statistics show more than 86% of victims know their offender. Some victims are fearful of being taken away from their families because they know or live with the offender. These examples are some of the reasons why many survivors wait years, sometimes decades to disclose. How devastating for the victim to finally have the courage and strength to disclose and find out they will not have the chance to report and/or prosecute the offender because of the statute of limitations. This is a very important part of the healing process, being able to speak out, to take action and regain his/her power and control that was taken from them. These victims would benefit from having justice served, as this is a very important part of the healing process.

It is essential that the statute of limitations be eliminated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.